

ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE ▪ AMERICAN RIVERS ▪ CLEAN WATER ACTION ▪ DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE ▪ ENVIRONMENT AMERICA ▪ FRIENDS OF THE EARTH ▪ GREENPEACE USA ▪ IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA ▪ LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS ▪ NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY ▪ NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION ▪ NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL ▪ PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ▪ SIERRA CLUB ▪ THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND ▪ THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY ▪ UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

February 9, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We applaud your efforts to increase the nation's commitment to renewable energy and greatly appreciate the efforts of your administration to accomplish this goal. Mr. President, we are writing you to emphasize the importance of achieving these renewable energy goals and want to offer our thoughts on how to maximize development opportunities and avoid needless delays in permitting projects while minimizing the impacts on wildlife, wild lands, water and other important resources.

Secretary Salazar has advocated for, and we support, a "Smart from the Start" approach to planning, siting, designing, managing, and monitoring renewable energy generation and transmission. We believe that this approach, if properly implemented, will provide added certainty for project developers, investors, conservationists and other stakeholders by accelerating clean energy development and avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating environmental impacts that can result in conflicts and increase project costs and time delays. To us, Smart from the Start embodies the following key principles:

- Clean, renewable energy generation must be developed and deployed at different scales, including large-scale development, in appropriate areas.
- Renewable energy development must be guided to areas that have high clean energy potential; minimal conflicts with wildlife, wild lands, water, and other important resources and uses of the surrounding environments; and, wherever feasible, access to existing transmission.

- Thorough site-specific and landscape-level analysis of the potential environmental impacts of renewable energy projects, including their cumulative impacts, must be completed before projects are approved.
- Effective mitigation measures must be developed and required to compensate for unavoidable site-specific and regional impacts.
- Early and ongoing input and coordination with interested stakeholders, including project developers, regulators, tribes, conservation groups and other members of the public as well as with appropriate federal, state and local decision makers, must be assured.
- The operation and mitigation measures associated with renewable energy projects must be consistently and carefully monitored at both the individual project and landscape levels, and the information obtained be used to improve existing and future projects and permitting and mitigation processes.
- Public lands committed to large-scale renewable energy development must be fully and fairly valued like private lands, and a significant portion of the revenues generated from public lands must be reinvested in conservation.
- Project developers must have the financial and technological resources to design, build, operate, and decommission their projects as well as to carry out appropriate on-site and off-site restoration and mitigation.
- New transmission projects and upgrades should connect clean renewable energy resources and should not facilitate carbon-heavy generation.

We have learned a great deal from our past experiences with conventional and renewable energy development. Most importantly, we have learned that a strategic and coordinated approach to designing energy generation and transmission at the beginning stages of project planning not only facilitates energy development, but can help preserve the rich natural and cultural heritage that our public lands provide.

Sincerely,

Cindy Shogan
Executive Director
Alaska Wilderness League

Robert Wendelgass
President
Clean Water Action

Rebecca Wodder
President
American Rivers

Rodger Schlickeisen
President and CEO
Defenders of Wildlife

Margie Alt
Executive Director
Environment America

Erich Pica
President
Friends of the Earth

Phil D. Radford
Executive Director
Greenpeace USA

David Hoskins
Executive Director
Izaak Walton League of America

Gene Karpinski
President
League of Conservation Voters

David Yarnold
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National Audubon Society

Larry Schweiger
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation

Frances Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Peter Wilk, MD
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Michael Brune
Executive Director
Sierra Club

Will Rogers
President
The Trust for Public Land

Bill Meadows
President
The Wilderness Society

Kevin Knobloch
President
Union of Concerned Scientists

cc: The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
The Honorable Lisa Jackson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
The Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Jon Wellinghoff, Chairman, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission